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ABSTRACT

Described is the community educational resource center (CERC), defined to be a multipurpose, community-based facility that delivers a coordinated system of special educational resources, human and nonhuman, to instructional and administrative personnel confronted by educationally handicapped children. Covered in the description are program need in the education of educationally handicapped children, program purpose of improving delivery of educational services to educationally handicapped children, service activities of diagnostic and treatment intervention, inservice training for school personnel, development and diffusion of the resource system, management, ongoing evaluation, program components, financial policy, and personnel including educational strategists, resource teachers, training consultant, educational technologists, school psychologists and related remediation personnel, and resource center coordinator. Concluding the paper is a discussion of CERC as a community-based facility. (CB)

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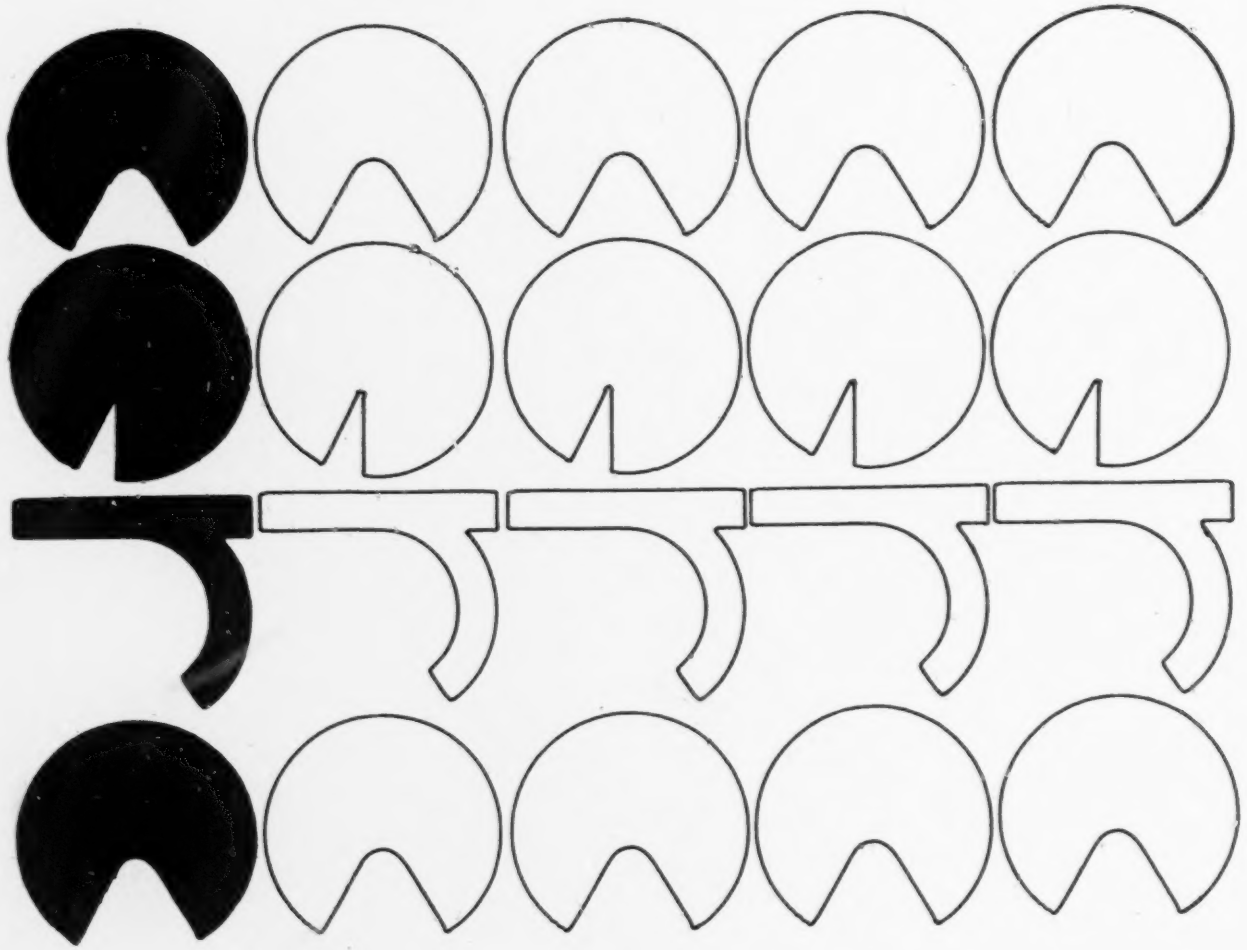

community educational resource center

COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

MIDWESTERN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FOR THE EDUCATIONALLY HANDICAPPED

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Michael J. Robbins, Project Director

U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare
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REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

HISTORY

By an act of Congress (Public Law 91-230, Title VI, Part C, 1969), the establishment of "Regional Resource Centers" was made possible. The development of regional centers has been directed by the Division of Research, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, United States Office of Education. Currently there are six regional educational resource centers (Iowa, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Utah), each developing and diffusing alternative resources capable of responding to the challenge of insuring every handicapped child's right to learn. Regional Resource Centers have the responsibility of developing a regional system of resource centers. The concept is best understood as a continuum of "backup" resource centers consisting of a regional resource center serving one or more states, state resource centers, a number of associate resource centers at the intermediate level within each state, and community resource centers at the local school district level.

The Midwestern Educational Resource Center (MERC), located in Iowa, has six states within its region; Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. The Midwestern Educational Resource Center staff, from the beginning, has worked toward developing a regional system of resource centers. In an attempt to disseminate information about the various centers and their respective programs and services, working papers are being written which define and describe their operations. The following text discusses one of the centers: a Community Educational Resource Center (CERC).

COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

DEFINITION

A Community Educational Resource Center (CERC) is a multipurpose, community-based facility, delivering a coordinated system of special educational resources, human and nonhuman, to instructional and

administrative personnel confronted by educationally handicapped children. The Community Educational Resource Center represents a resource subsystem, one of three subsystems which comprise a local system of education. The other two are the instructional and administrative subsystems. In addition, a Community Educational Resource Center is part of a continuum of centers within a regional system of resource centers. A system of backup resource centers begins at the local school district level with a CERC (one or more per district, or one or more districts per CERC), backed up by an Associate (single or multicounty) Educational Resource Center (AERC). The AERC is backed up by a State Educational Resource Center (SERC), which in turn is backed up by a Regional Educational Resource Center (RERC).

It is the intent of the United States Office of Education's Bureau of Education for the Handicapped that by 1977 there will be in each of the fifty states a state network of resource centers characterized by a central state center, a number of associate centers within a state, and community educational resource centers in local school districts.

NEED

The American education system is confronted with the challenge of educating some six million educationally handicapped children (Martin, 1971). To educate children handicapped in school requires educational practitioners capable of delivering educational services matched to each child's specific educational needs. Since teachers have the direct responsibility for educating children, they have the right to request backup support programs and services to facilitate their development of specific competencies, i.e., gaining additional knowledge and skill in early identification of educationally handicapped pupils, educational diagnosis, educational treatment (curriculum, instruction, and technology), educational evaluation and use of resource personnel.

The community school's system of delivering educational services to educationally handicapped children needs renewal. Innovative school systems are searching for differentiated delivery systems to meet the needs of teachers confronted by children with special needs. Most systems realize that teachers have the right to request backup support services to facilitate their implementation of specific educational services with children demonstrating cognitive, affective or psychomotor disabilities which interfere with their learning. These individual differences, interfering with learning, are characterized by poor academic and/or adjustment performance and are caused by environmental and/or organic factors. The lack of comprehensive support programs and services led Simches (1970) to state that "...there are very limited educational support systems in our schools and communities for handicapped children. If one system fails, the child is usually lost. He becomes a dropout or pushout. This failure to maximize the options for choosing educational programs for handicapped children has decreased our chance of success." The absence of alternative educational support systems and services at a community school level creates the need for a system of backup resources for educationally handicapped children. The Community Educational Resource Center, as one level of center within the continuum of centers, is one alternative model to meet this important need.

PURPOSE

The mission of a multipurpose Community Educational Resource Center is to improve the delivery of educational services to educationally handicapped children. An analysis of the mission results in five intermediate goal areas. These are to facilitate changes in: (1) children, (2) teachers, (3) administrators, (4) resource staff, and (5) parents. Differentiated resource personnel are responsible for the mission and goals being accomplished. The role of each resource person within a CERC is conceptualized in terms of functions. Role description by functions provides for a Program Evaluation Review Technique (PERT), Planned Program Budget System (PPBS) and Cost Benefit Analysis which demonstrates accountability, responsibility and

effectiveness of services.

The local Educational Resource Center's general purpose necessitates the processes of: (1) conducting training for instructional, administrative, parental, and university student and faculty personnel; (2) providing direct educational diagnostic and treatment services to educationally handicapped children; (3) implementing a management system capable of accomplishing the CERC goals; (4) undertaking formative and summative evaluation to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of all resource programs and services, and; (5) serving as a high visability demonstration model for the implementation of similar centers throughout a six state region.

To provide both a comprehensive and systematic means for understanding the CERC model, a morphological (IPO) model was formulated (Figure 1). The model consists of three dimensions: input (components or resources that go into the system to implement processes), process (activities implemented by components to achieve goals), and output (facilitating change in people). Each dimension consists of a set of categories as indicated in the paradigm. The CERC model exemplifies a three-dimensional cube composed of 3x10x5 or 150 different cells, consisting of one dimension of three inputs, a second dimension of ten processes, and a third dimension comprising five outputs. Each cell represents an independent factor of educational service.

A brief discussion of the activities implemented to achieve the CERC goals will assist in communicating an overview of a CERC.

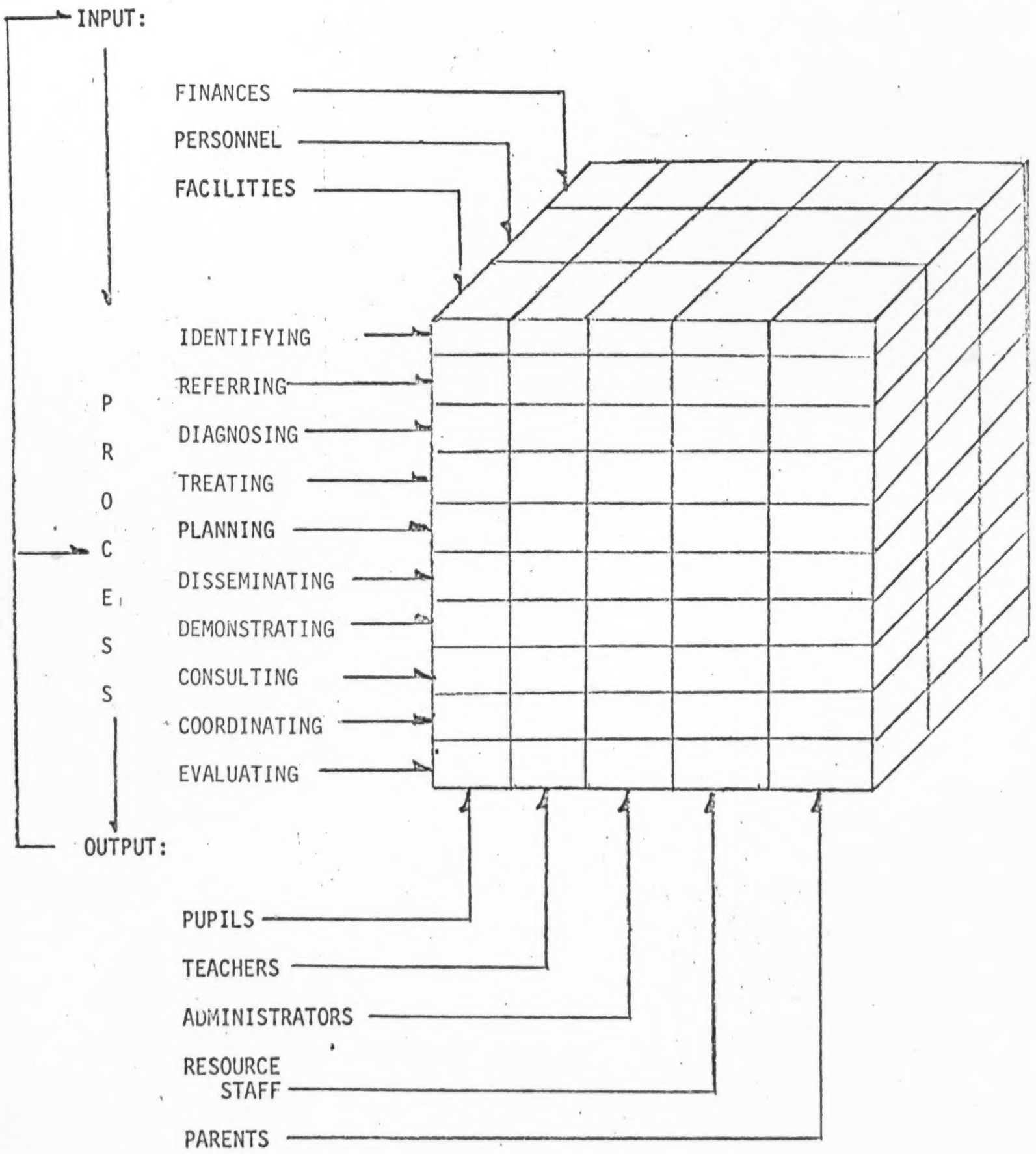
ACTIVITIES

SERVICE

Direct educational diagnostic and educational treatment intervention are provided to the moderately and severely educationally handicapped child by resource teachers. All children are "staffed" before services

Figure 1

COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER:
A MORPHOLOGICAL MODEL



are delivered by the resource teacher program. Staffings are not the same as team approaches to diagnosis and treatment. Deno (1971) elaborates on this point when she states:

> "...Mental health and health facilities across the country even more than school people are questioning the appropriateness of traditional practices in utilization of specialists in "team approaches" to diagnosis and treatment. New medical specialties such as 'family practice', programs training nurses to perform the majority of the routine exams doctors traditionally performed, and a variety of other para-professional training programs are cases in point. It would be irony indeed if educators clung more tenaciously to 'medical model' approaches than the medics do themselves!"

The resource teacher develops and applies the best strategies for diagnosing and treating the special education needs of handicapped children referred to them. The resource teacher program consists of various alternatives. One option calls for the resource teacher to work with handicapped pupils in the regular classroom. Another requires the resource teacher to work with handicapped children in a resource room. A third is a mix of the previous two. Resource teacher alternatives are possible if educators adhere to the principle that differentiated problems dictate differentiated programs.

All CERC services are provided to educationally handicapped children in terms of their impaired or inadequate functioning, that is, their unique intellectual, affective and/or physical dysfunctions which may interfere with learning. This approach is in direct contrast to the approach of labeling and placing children in programs by symptomatic and/or etiologic categories.

TRAINING

Community Educational Resource Centers are considered uniquely appropriate for inservice training of teachers, administrators, other professional personnel and paraprofessional personnel concerned with the education of handicapped children. A CERC provides observation

and practicum resources for training special education as well as other helping profession personnel at the undergraduate and graduate levels. CERC's will accept and assist in the preservice training of students from colleges and universities within the six state region. Training parents of handicapped children to better understand and cope with their children is also provided.

Inservice training of teachers, the primary consumers of all CERC staff development training activities, so that each, in his own classroom, can meet with increasing effectiveness the needs of mildly and moderately handicapped children, is provided through the CERC team of educational resource strategist, educational resource teacher, educational technologist, educational psychologist, educational counselor, school social worker, speech and hearing therapist, and other support personnel deemed necessary. In establishing CERC's throughout a six state region, respective CERC programs and services most probably will be labeled by different terms; for example, an educational resource strategist might be called in some states a consulting teacher, educational interventionist, teacher consultant, instructional specialist, special education programmer, or others. Resource teachers may be known as prescriptive teachers, clinical teachers, psychoeducational diagnosticians, noncategorical resource teachers, crisis teachers, diagnostic teachers, educational clinicians, diagnostic remedial specialist, diagnostic prescriptive teachers, and others. The point the author is making is that the program labeling is insignificant. Different authors have a tendency to use different titles for generally the same type of professional. What is significant is: (1) identifying the <u>needs</u> for the program; (2) stating clearly the <u>purpose</u> of the program; (3) determining what <u>processes</u> must be implemented to accomplish the program goals; (4) providing the necessary <u>components</u> which facilitate delivery of the processes; (5) utilizing appropriate <u>evaluation</u> techniques; and (6) <u>training</u> to develop committed and competent persons to implement the program.

Innovative inservice training techniques are continuously being developed and diffused by the Community Educational Resource Center.

All inservice training resources, human and nonhuman, are utilized to assist teachers in planning, developing, implementing and evaluating improved and expanded educational diagnostic and treatment strategies.

DEVELOPMENT AND DIFFUSION

Based on needs assessment studies conducted by the centers within the Midwestern Educational Resource System, alternative manpower programs and services will be developed and diffused. To assist the MERC in accomplishing model resource development and diffusion, CERC's will provide the means to introduce innovative resources to the educational system. As a community-based center which assists in developing pupil personnel resource delivery systems, CERC's possess a major potential for studying needed changes in manpower training, direct diagnostic and treatment services to children with difficulties, ways of administering CERC's and evaluation models. Plans are being developed in each of the six states within the MERS for a state system of CERC's as part of a state network of resource centers which will access the services of a CERC to every handicapped child in the state.

MANAGEMENT

The management of Community Educational Resource Centers will be provided through the local school district CERC coordinator. The team coordinator's professional identity will vary from district to district. A local director of special education and/or pupil personnel services, building principal, psychologist, counselor, social worker, elementary curriculum director, or another professional person may function in the role of a CERC coordinator. The coordinator manages, that is, he plans, organizes, motivates, and controls human and nonhuman resources and their interface in order to achieve the CERC's goals. The major factors of concern for the CERC manager are time, scheduling, transportation, staffings, costs and staff and pupil performance. Backing up Community Educational Resource Center managers will be managers at

the Associate, State, and Regional Educational Resource Centers. Training for resource center coordinators is provided by MERC.

EVALUATION

Evaluation must be undertaken to determine the efficacy of the CERC model. Evaluation is an ongoing part of CERC operations in order to know whether the centers are accomplishing their purposes. Evaluation will focus its research on the major resource functions implemented by CERC's: service, training, development and diffusion, management, and evaluation. In addition, evaluation will result in identifying and documenting the need for and services of associate and state educational resource centers. Community Educational Resource Center staff will assist in developing and executing a plan to evaluate their own efficiency, creativity and effectiveness. They will report their results to others concerned with the development of similar centers.

It is important to know what aspects of the centers are most effective, and what changes are required to make them more useful to teachers and others working with handicapped children. Collected information will include: (1) changes in educationally handicapped children, (2) changes in teacher beliefs toward educating the educationally handicapped, (3) changes in teacher diagnostic and instructional behavior with the educationally handicapped, (4) changes in administrator attitudes toward the need for and types of special resources for teachers of the educationally handicapped, (5) changes in the attitudes of existing resource personnel toward a CERC as an alternative means toward improving the education of handicapped children, and (6) the beliefs and behavior of Community Educational Resource Center staff implementing tneir respective roles and functions. From the data collected, it will be important to perform analyses to determine those CERC characteristics which led to success and those which contributed to failure. Attempts will be made through statistical design to compare the CERC model and its results with the outcomes of other existing models. Evaluation

techniques will be implemented throughout the academic year on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. The ultimate questions that evaluation must answer are: (1) how best to deliver educational resource services, (2) what is to be delivered, and (3) why is it to be delivered?

COMPONENTS

The Community Educational Resource System, as with all systems, is characterized by purposes (goals, objectives, ends, intents, aims), processes (functions, operations, procedures, means, activities), and parts (components). The sequence of purposes, processes and parts is significant because it illustrates operational priorities. Purpose states what the system is for; it determines the activities to be developed and delivered. Activities are the means of achieving the goals; they indicate the types of components to be employed. Parts of a system or components, are chosen for their ability to achieve process implementation in order to accomplish the goals of the system. Examples of components or subsystems comprising a CERC are finances, personnel and facilities.

Technically, a Community Educational Resource System is defined as a group of interrelated components, each performing significant activities contributing to the achievement of its purpose. A brief discussion of components will assist in further describing the operations of a Community Educational Resource Center.

FINANCE

Initially, the Midwestern Educational Resource Center assists in the development and diffusion of CERC's through funding, evaluation, training and technical assistance. When fully operational, associate and state resource centers will assume those responsibilities. Model budgets for CERC's have been developed by the Midwestern Educational Resource Center.

PERSONNEL

A Community Educational Resource Center for the educationally handicapped represents a team of interdisciplinary resource personnel. Program alternatives for delivering support services will obviously vary among local school districts within each state and among states. To be effective, the team must facilitate maximum interdisciplinary involvement and services. Initially, a CERC will probably staff the following personnel.

A. Educational Strategists

A certified special education teacher whose role is that of a full-time inservice teacher-trainer. A resource strategist is assigned to one or two elementary school buildings for the purpose of facilitating teacher competencies in working with educationally handicapped children. The strategist provides direct educational intervention with teachers in their own classrooms rather than direct educational therapy with children. The strategist helps teachers work out their own educational diagnosis, prescriptive decisions and delivery of treatment. In many instances, the special education resource strategist will serve as a liaison between the teacher and other members of the Community Educational Resource Center staff. Training of prospective resource strategists is provided at the Midwestern Educational Resource Center. This training will be available until individual states are implementing their own state resource centers. Steps to establish certification and/or reimbursement for a resource strategist program by State Departments of Education are being initiated.

B. Resource Teachers

A certified special education teacher whose role is that of implementing a noncategorical, child-centered program. Referrals

to the resource teacher are processed through the resource strategist. The resource teacher program, within the CERC's, have maximum flexibility. In some instances, resource teachers will provide direct educational diagnostic and treatment services to handicapped pupils in the regular grades. Others will do the same but only in their own resource rooms. In other situations, a resource teacher may do both of the above. In all cases, the problems will dictate the practices. In addition to assisting pupils, resource teachers assist in training teachers to implement special procedures for special needs of handicapped students. Like the resource strategist program, steps to establish certification and/or reimbursement for a resource teacher program by State Departments of Education are being initiated.

C. Training Consultant

Strategists and resource teachers, like other resource personnel, need the services of a training consultant. Such a person will be employed by a CERC, AERC, SERC or the MERC. The numbers of strategists and resource teachers within a CERC will determine which resource center employs a training consultant. The key requirement for a training consultant is that the person must have functioned as either an educational strategist and/or resource teacher.

D. Educational Technologists

Educational technology centers (often referred to as media centers) are generally developed and implemented by educational technologists, media specialists, or librarians. Within a CERC, a network of media centers will be developed. Size of local school districts and the availability of funds will determine the extensiveness of the media network. Three

possible arrangements are suggested. First, small districts may have one librarian-media person managing a building-level media center. The center will provide media analysis and retrieval, and design and production services. Second, the districts may regionalize or group their elementary buildings. Each building would contain a media center with the Materials Analysis and Retrieval System (MARS) services and only one building would provide design and production services. Materials from all the local schools could be shared within each region. Third, larger districts may implement the second strategy (above) but, in addition, add a centralized, districtwide, media center which would house media and media-ware to be shared by all schools in the district. The educational technology services are catagorized as follows:

1. Media Analysis and Retrieval System (MARS)

   An elementary school librarian, completing a one-week training program, (training will be provided by the technologists at the Midwestern Educational Resource Center, state media consultants, or the associate special education instructional materials centers), will manage the materials analysis and retrieval system (MARS). The MARS will be installed in each elementary school building within a CERC. School librarians, after being trained on the use of the MARS, will in turn train building teachers to utilize the system to enhance their educational diagnostic and treatment strategies.

2. Media Design and Production System (MDPS)

   An elementary school librarian or other appropriate personnel will be trained to provide media design and production services. A two week training program is offered by the Midwestern Educational Resource Center technologists, and when possible, by

the State media consultants or the associate special education instructional material center personnel. A design and production person will be available for each building, for a cluster of elementary buildings, one for the entire district or any combination of the three.

F. School psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, school speech and hearing therapists, remedial reading teachers and school nurses.

The availability of the above special resource personnel will vary among the six states. The CERC model requires the realignment of present special resource personnel in order to enhance the delivery of special services.

The MERC staff anticipates that in some local school districts, there will be an interest in extending the functions of certain auxiliary staff, i.e., school psychologists and/or school counselors, in the direction of these functions performed by educational resource strategists. To accommodate this interest, the Midwestern Educational Resource Center will accept these personnel into the resource strategist training program, providing certain criteria have been met. Such an undertaking will be closely evaluated to determine its feasibility. In all instances, such personnel will implement the functions of a resource strategist.

F. Resource Center Coordinator

The Community Educational Resource Center coordinator complements the team. His professional identity and position will vary among local districts. His major activities will involve communications, leadership, coordination, supervision, liaison with local,county, state and the MERC personnel and assisting in evaluation. As a resource team leader, he will coordinate the activities of the team and coordinate the team's activities

with instructional and administrative personnel.

All personnel identified are representative of possible staffing patterns for community educational resource centers. Their roles, functions and specific operating procedures, by districts, are in need of definition and description. This will be accomplished during the planning phase for each CERC within the six states.

FACILITY

A CERC is a community-based facility as opposed to a county-, state-, or regional-based resource center operation. Site selection, buildings and space identifying key decision makers are major issues to be discussed when planning and implementing a CERC. Throughout each of the six rural states, a CERC will generally encompass the entire school district. Most local districts contain a high school, a junior high school and one to three elementary schools. In other school systems, there may be any number of CERC's. In some districts, all Community Educational Resource Center staff will be housed in and work from one elementary building or a non-school building. In other districts, various Community Educational Resource Center staff members will be located in different buildings. The alternatives are many and possibly no one arrangement is superior to the other. The demographic, geographic and programatic variables undoubtedly will result in different arrangements. One alternative which at this time seems quite common is to have the resource strategist assigned to one or more buildings (depending on student enrollment). In each building a reasonable facsimile of an office is available for the strategist. The resource teachers have the option of delivering their services within the regular classroom, the resource room or a combination of the two. Every elementary building, through the media librarian, will provide media analysis and retrieval service. Design and production services will be located in each elementary building, a region of the district or in a

centralized location serving the entire district. If centralized, there are advantages in placing the design and production services in the same building which houses the resource room program.

The other special resource personnel are typically itinerants, scheduled to be in specific buildings at certain times. Their office space is usually centralized. Regardless of scheduling practices, needed building space and centralized vs. decentralized housing, the crucial issue concerns the quest for and quality of a community educational resource center network capable of delivering a continuity of special resource services to both the instructional and administrative systems.

The needed equipment, materials and supplies for a Community Educational Resource Center are those typically found in any comprehensive and competent program for the educationally handicapped. The MERC has prepared recommended "media purchasing packages", listing items, costs, and address for equipment, materials and supplies.

The previous description of a CERC is representative of possible alternatives for implementation. Two concepts must be remembered. One that a CERC is a planned, coordinated and evaluated system, that is, within a CERC every effort is made to deliver all services - direct, training, managerial, evaluation and development and diffusion to meet the educational needs of handicappped pupils in a systematic style. Second, that a CERC represent one type of a center within a regional system of resource centers. That means, that a CERC, until proven otherwise, needs and is therefore backed up by an associate or intermediate educational resource center which in turn is backed up by a state center which is backed up by a regional center.

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